Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada
Canada

II.

My soul, and whence is this to thee!
Would'st know if so great marvel be,
That Jesus Christ should condescend
To dwell, thy close abiding Friend?

Ask not alone of gracious moods,
When peace, with wings of healing, broods,
And meekness, love and patience sit,
Disciples at those wounded feet.

If Christ doth truly dwell in thee,
Uneasy Inmate will He be;
A heavy Presence, sighing, sad,
Shall oft defy thee to make glad

With any joy that sense can bring;
In vain thou stirr'st thy heart to sing
As though no care oppress'd thy state;
A Man of sorrows, He doth wait

Till thou be moved to hear His plaint;
Till thou perceive it is thy taint,
The plague spot of an alien heart,
That moves Him to so sad a part!

And then—ah, when, His grief made thine,
When penitence, sharp grace divine,
Doth the corrupting spot atone
In tears, all His, and yet thine own,—

Thy springing heart, a child's again,
Forgetting all the former pain,
Is jocund with the temper'd mirth
Of sou'.s new wash'd to their new birth!

(*Editor.*)

CO-EDUCATION.

By The Rev. Cecil Bosanquet, M.A.

The aim of education is surely to enable us to make the best of ourselves, for the sake of both ourselves and others in life both here and hereafter. Education should then be the preparing and fitting useful tools for the business of the great universe. It should form efficient reproducers and carriers on of a sound race, the descendants of which shall be the better for the training given to their forbears.

Now I ask, is any serious person, occupied with the great problems of social life, satisfied with the results of the general training of our men and women in view of the aims which I have just stated? The author of the *House of Quiet* published in 1904, says that for the large majority of youthful English minds, the ordinary classical education is narrowing, unimproving, and conspicuous for an absence of intellectual enjoyment, and that when adolescence begins, boys who have been zealous grow indifferent, wearied, even rebellious, till they drift into a kind of cynicism about the whole thing, a kind of dumb certainty that whatever else may be got from work, enjoyment in no form is the result. He complains that the grammar taught is that of odd and eccentric forms, seldom met in a boy's reading, which they have to commit to memory, of as much practical use as lists of nonsense words, and that the majority of the boys never get the idea that they are in the presence of literature at all.

Sir Oliver Lodge, in an address to teachers in February, said that the average schoolboy of to-day was ignorant, that he did not really know the subjects which he had been taught, that he had spent years at Latin without being able to use Latin freely, that he learned what he called French and German, and was tongue-tied when he went abroad. He spoke of Eton boys whom he had met as the most futile set that could be imagined for any useful purpose. They had obtained the tags of classics, with a fondness for field sports, combined with a taste for luxurious living, but in regard to

the facts of the universe they would not pretend to be of any use. The idleness and luxury of the gilded youth were appalling. How was it, he asked in one of his addresses, that the eager inquiring child was turned into the intellectually dull, apathetic and intellectually indolent professional schoolboy? He believed that it consisted partly in the intellectual pabulum which was supplied and partly in the methods employed for supplying it.

Another writer in an essay on co-education also speaks of this idleness of the English boy, and considers that that idleness is the canker at the root of our training—the *fons et origo mali*. If this be true there must be some cause for the initial idleness. It surely is not born in the English boy. The Anglo-Saxon race is not an idle race in itself. England would not be what she is if it were so. Sir Oliver Lodge decidedly considers it to be superinduced first in the home, and then in the school. My personal remembrances of school teaching certainly force upon my mind that every method was taken to make the ordinary boy idle. An idle and unconscientious tutor gave me Watts' Scripture History to be learned by heart, and Cornwall's Geography without a map, Euclid with no explanation, to be repeated as best I could, and classics with no sufficient helps, the Greek grammar with Latin explanations, dictionary and lexicon with so many meanings for the word seached for, that as the context had seldom been grasped, success was hardly possible. The excuse made by such idle teachers is that boys so learn to work alone, much as they would learn to swim if thrown into the sea. Some doubtless do get on, but the majority acquire a distaste for their studies. The tutor gets his fees, and the pupil is waterproofed against education. Some of this is I hope ancient history, for there are now honest teachers working on psychological lines, trying helpful methods. Many a pupil is comforted by a little success in his way, instead of depressed by constant failure. There are charming little books of Greek stories, aids to Euclid such as Marianne Knops's guide, and many others, and yet in this twentieth century the cry still goes forth, that the schoolboy is constantly insuperably idle. Is it that the natural order of mental development is not followed? Subjects given at an early age when the mind is incapable of

assimilating them, as indigestible as beef steak for a baby's digestive organs?

Herbert Spencer says that we drag the child away from the facts in which it is interested, and which it is actively assimilating for itself, and put before it facts far too complex for it to understand, and therefore distasteful to it, and thrust them into its mind by force and threats of punishment. By thus denying the knowledge it craves and cramming it with knowledge it cannot digest, we produce a morbid state of the faculties, and a consequent disgust for knowledge in general. Yet many teachers are studying psychology and training in accordance with nature, encouraging oral acquirement of language in early childhood instead of book-work, using magic lanterns for history and geography, and giving a taste for science by teaching its rudiments in excursions as is done so constantly in Germany, something to draw out faculty, instead of merely putting in indigestible facts. Nevertheless a writer in 1903 still says the true educational problem is the idleness of the English boy.

The truth is that there is a still further and deeper cause for the idleness which is said to be the bottom of all this lack of interest on the part of the ordinary boy. The writer of the essay quoted before says that the religious motive is apparently the only cure; in other words, that the want of religious motive is the root of the idleness in question; but surely mental food ought not to be so unpalatable that it can be got down only by a stern sense of duty. No physical health would be possible if a boy's beef and potatoes were swallowed only for a sense of duty. The hunger for information and improvement ought to be engendered, that same hunger that a healthy boy has for his bodily food. No! We must go still further and still deeper down to find the cause for this distaste. We need to return to the more natural conditions of life, to cease to follow a poor convention.

The very birds and beasts keep up a home life in their nests and holes till their offspring can shift for themselves, in which home life the sexes are not separated. The remedy I believe to be the allowing of the action of the sexes upon one another, through the most impressionable time of life, allowing, I ought to say the not preventing that natural

action. Sir Oliver Lodge says that he doubts whether it is wise to herd boys together away from home influence. I am quite sure that it will always be found that in the ideal home, in which the father and mother, themselves cultivated and trained, unite to guide intelligently their little ones, boys and girls together, bringing their own separate influences to bear, leaving the boys to help the girls and the girls the boys, that in such a home we shall not hear much of the hopeless idleness of the English boy. The strong motive of love is constantly at work. The parents' keen interest in their children's daily progress, the eagerness of the children to please the parents, level down all obstacles. Mental culture is alive, not dead as in much ordinary education. The pearls of literature are enjoyed keenly by boys and girls together; painting and music shared; the emotions called forth and developed; the Fatherhood of God realised as taught by our Lord; religious dogmas and dull religious teaching replaced by feeling in action, by living beating of the heart; moral teaching growing out of the give-and-take of home life; love at the bottom of it all; books shared, discussed, criticised and understood. The co-education, as in wholesome home life, is nature's method. But arriving at this point we come to an almost insuperable barrier.

The ordinary English home is not a wholesome nursery for youth. Mr. Lionel Ford, the headmaster of Repton, said in the Church Congress that seldom was it that boys brought from their home training any sense of proportion between work and play, that they had been spoilt for simple occupations by a surfeit of toys and games, and being left to spend their leisure in their own manner without guidance from their parents; and Herbert Spencer says, "Is it not an astonishing fact that though on the treatment of offspring depends their lives, and deaths, and their moral welfare or ruin, yet not one word of instruction on the treatment of offspring is ever given to those who will be parents? Is it not monstrous that the fate of a new generation should be left to the chances of unreasoning custom, impulse, fancy, joined with the suggestions of ignorant nurses and the prejudiced counsel of grandmothers?"

That parents should begin the difficult task of rearing children without ever having given a thought to the principles—

physical, moral, and intellectual—which ought to guide them excites neither surprise at the actors nor pity for their victims. For the co-education of home life to succeed the parents must be each equipped for their work, and that want of equipment offers an insuperable barrier to success. But even in the case of fairly wise parents there are difficulties. The father has his occupations, the mother has many calls upon her—some real and many more factitious. In any case too both boys and girls need a wider outlook than can be given by any home life. No boy and, I should say, no girl holds well her place in life if she be only a home product; and yet, and yet, I am quite sure that the cutting off of parents from children, of brothers from sisters, is *the* great root of the idleness and want of interest in youth, and the listlessness in later age of both our men and women.

We must then find a means of retaining these great links, and yet giving the external training needed. In Utopia this would be done by the day school, when there would be a judicious mixture of home and school life. Family life would not be broken up. There would be the return home for meals and for the evening hours. The father would keep up his acquaintance with his boys. Many fathers do not do this as things generally go. The day school would be only an enlarged edition of the family. Boys and girls would work together, and play together when desirable and possible. Parents and teachers would have some chance of knowing each other and working in concert. The boys would see much of their sisters and their sisters' friends, and the girls of their brothers and intimates. I am afraid though, as things stand at present, that the home life modified by the day school can only be Utopian.

I have spoken to teachers in high schools and have been told how cruelly the parents fail to fulfil the part of the work which falls to their share. Children from well-to-do homes come breakfastless to school, in one case the child of a literary mother. The mother of another gave card parties for her boy in the evening, and another encouraged work till far into the night. Again the diet of the children is often wrong. English ladies do not understand kitchen science, and fail to grasp its vital importance. It is comparatively

rare for instance to find vegetables thoroughly cooked, and the simple dishes of childhood prepared with sufficient care. Variety is seldom at all understood. Twice cooked meat with half cooked flour, and yet on wholesome carefully prepared food the whole life of the child depends.

As the success of any day school *must* depend on wisely managed home life, we are practically for the present compelled to rely upon boarding schools. We must regretfully separate parent and child, and only hope that future generations may arise in which home may become the nursery garden, which it should be, for the young plants.

The boarding school must then become our point of study. We must see whether it cannot be made to combine more or less the advantages of home life, the chief point of which is the influence of one sex upon another. How can we best follow the *natural* lines? Instead of monastic and conventual schools have establishments on family lines. In this we are sure to meet with opposition on all sides. The British matron will say that common sense forbids it. What? Allow her girls to associate with boys? They would learn slang and rude habits. So I think would also say the British father. He would urge that the fitness of things is against it. But not only the British parent. The Eastern has always shut up his females as a matter of self-respect, feeling that the sex cannot be trusted not to disgrace itself and, through itself, him. Again, the Roman Catholic communion has always been most careful to segregate the sexes. Men are evil for women, and women for men. Celibacy the higher life. In churches the separation is often made; men on one side, women on the other, as if even in the worship of their common Father they should be apart.

The question which I desire to ask is whether this segregation has been a success—whether much of the slackness in intellectual training is not the direct result of this separation—whether the return to the natural state of things would not at once put a stop to it, as it does in family life when that family life is what it should be. Now before I go into that question I wish to quote some statements made in an essay of Mr. Cecil Grant's. He says, "The monastic system in schools is the stronghold of immorality," and adds, "Whenever

it has fallen to my lot to meet in conversation any of the headmasters of our Public Schools, I have always endeavoured to ask this question, 'Do you consider that it is possible to root out from a large school the vice of immorality?' The sadness of the answer has varied only in degree. Whilst some have seemed to regard this inevitable presence almost with resignation, others have shown that it is to them a veritable horror, casting its dark shadow over all their experience. That this dark shadow looms over all establishments where unnatural separation of the sexes obtains, must be known to every person acquainted with mediæval and modern life in every country." In one case a lunatic asylum was the result, in another suicide. A right convention compels silence on such topics, but the evils referred to are none the less serious in their influence, because they cannot be spoken of in plain language. I feel myself that if there were no other reasons against separating the sexes at the most important time of their vital development, when conscious and subconscious sex feeling is at work in its mysterious impulses, that the doing so is nothing short of a crime. The hindering of the stimulus given by girls to boys, and by boys to girls, is nothing to be compared in importance to this. The essence of all true religion seems to me to be walking in God's ways, and I don't believe in going contrary to the larger lines laid down in nature, in other words God's laws, by the artificial separation of the sexes.

On this head Mr. Grant quotes Richter as saying, "To insure modesty I would advise the education of the sexes together, for two boys will preserve twelve girls or two girls twelve boys pure amidst coarse jokes and suggestions, merely by that instinctive sense which is the source of natural modesty, but I will guarantee nothing in a school where girls are alone together and still less where boys are," and adds, "The argument goes deeper than that, claiming for boys and girls brought up together the immunity from temptation enjoyed by the family. The temptation is not natural but unnatural, the product of artificial conditions. To extend the family so as to embrace all those with whom the child comes into contact is to render the temptation non-existent."

Another writer says that the boy becomes more manly

by association with girls, with a manliness that is the foundation of all boy virtue, the contempt of all nastiness in thought, word, or deed. He says that during the first few months of opening a co-education school he took the greatest pains to assure himself on this point. The sexual instincts of the boy are kept in healthy channels, instead of getting into perverted channels. He is led to the conviction that it is the unnatural separation of boys and girls which concentrates their attention on the subject and forces it into their consciousness. Mr. Earle, in the *National Review*, says, "I believe the healthiest and best preventive of anything like morbid friendship is allowing girls to associate naturally and freely with boys. Intimacy between the sexes has many advantages, and with girls certainly stops a very undesirable form of sentiment often started for middle-aged and even old married men." Charlotte Bronte's novel of *The Professor* carries out I think this view.

I gladly now return to the intellectual side—co-education as a cure to the idleness and want of interest in the ordinary schoolboy. An American writer says, "When the sexes are separated methods of instruction are unbalanced and graduate constantly towards extremes which may be called masculine and feminine. The masculine extreme is mechanical formalizing in its lowest shape and the mere intellectual training in its highest side. The feminine is the learning by rote system on the lower side, and superfluity of sentiment in the higher activities. Each needs the other as a counter check. More rapid progress is made, and we find girls making wonderful advances in mathematical studies, while boys seem to take hold of literature far better from the influence of the female portion of the class."

Again, with reference to games. Though it is not possible nor desirable that boys and girls should pursue all their studies together, so in the playground certain games only can be successfully played in common, and in those the boys learn that a girl is none the less feminine because she has courage and lacks affectation, and the girls that the most manly boys are at the same time the most gentle. Games bring out character in a very striking way, and in the playground the sexes gain a knowledge of human nature most necessary for

their after life. An ordinary school of boys and girls would have a fairly all-round collection of different individualities and would give a far truer outlook than that gained by the ordinary story with its impossible character drawing, unnaturally bright lights and equally false shadows. The advocates of our public schools have always put forward as one of their chief advantages, that boys gain in them a knowledge of the world not to be acquired elsewhere; but a knowledge of one sex alone cannot be considered a knowledge of the world. Practical life demands reasonable comprehension of all the individualities whom we most influence and who most influence us.

But there is another great field of usefulness in co-education. The arbitrary separation of the sexes, at the very time when they would in the natural course of things most profoundly modify each other and most easily learn to comprehend each other, results in much unhappiness in the marriage relation, later on much mischief to the race.

Is it not proverbial that men are taken more by a merely pretty face, a smart gown, and a dangerously constricted waist? Do not young men constantly to their lasting unhappiness choose as partners women the least fitted to be reliable wives and judicious mothers? Can such marriages be said to be made in heaven? Would even the youngest and most thoughtless man be caught by merely superficial attractions, if he had had natural opportunities of judging the other sex? He would already have had an opportunity of seeing what constant association with a vain person would mean.

In the case of girls a mistake in marriage brings about even greater misery, for a nice girl married to an unworthy man has staked her all and has no outside life to deaden her wounded feeling. Girls who have had no experience of the opposite sex, who have an overwhelming amount of imagination, how are they to choose? According to the present system the nicer girls often hold aloof. They have seen silly and vulgar flirtations, have heard remarks about women running after men, and become in consequence stand-offish, cold and unattractive. They do not marry and the world is the worse for their loss as wives and mothers, whereas brought

up with the other sex their value would have stood out, they would have understood and been understood. Dorothea would never have married either Casaubon or Lladislaw. After the deed is done, the bond irreparably made, how much unhappiness in the joined life would be avoided if men and women had learned to understand the sexual characteristics. What can be worse for the children of unwise marriages than to hear the bickering, to see the coldness and sometimes hatred which is the natural result? What worse atmosphere for a growing up child? The children too are at war in the very natures. Incompatible characteristics inherited. Heterogeneous personality has been explained as the result of inheritance.

I will pass over the immense influence for good which the co-education of the sexes would have in matters of breeding and courtesy. Brothers and sisters in a well-trained family help each other very greatly; the boys learn a courtesy not to be learned in any other manner, and the girls lose, or rather never acquire the painful giggling habit, which makes her male fellow-creatures ashamed to address her.

The opponents of co-education, having apparently an idea that the natural drawing together of the sexes has something evil in it, seem to fear danger in allowing association during growth. They forget that they call out passion by so doing. Young men unaccustomed to good women's society are most dangerously placed. A separation of years is followed by juxtaposition, and there is much which should have been gradual and wholly unconscious which comes with a burst. The man who in boyhood has been deprived during the greater part of his time of the sweet companionship of pure and refined women, their tender dignified ways, what is his view of women? The play of "She stoops to conquer" tells its own tale, but the terrible French novel tells a still worse one. The man deprived of good women's association is indeed to be pitied. He sullies the holiest things of human life.

All very well. This may or not be true. It is too great an experiment to be tried, this co-education, opposed as it is to all our conventions. My friends, it is no mere untried experiment. Where it has been seriously undertaken it has come out with flying colours. An American writer says,

"Co-education is the policy generally pursued, heartily endorsed by the majority of supervising officers, strongly supported by the people in all sections of the country. The common and public school of the United States is, as it has ever been, a school where boys and girls mingle as they do in a private family. Further," he says, "the association of the two sexes must have a very great influence upon their social and business relations in after years. It explains in great measure the freedom that women enjoy in this country (America), with respect to the fruit of careers, and especially the share which they take in the educational work of the country. In the public schools, 69 per cent. of the teachers are women. There is a recognition of woman's right as a natural guardian of children to exercise her judgment in respect to their education, and leads to the demand for her services as a public expediency. The most impressive fact is the increase in the number of co-educational colleges and universities. In 1880, that is 47 years from the founding of Oberlin, more than half the colleges of the country (51 per cent.) had adopted the policy. In 1880-1890 the proportion increased to 65 per cent. In 1900, 71 per cent. There are no instances of the abandonment of the policy after adoption in colleges or universities which had made suitable provision for the new class of students. Discipline has improved with the adoption of the mixed schools. The rudeness and abandon which prevail among boys when separate gave place at once to self-restraint in the presence of girls. The prurient sentimentality engendered by educating girls apart from boys (manifested by a frivolous and silly bearing when such girls are brought into the society of the opposite sex) disappeared almost entirely in mixed schools."

So much for practical experience. It is clear enough that in America co-education succeeds. American boys and men cannot be accused of the idleness attributed to the English boy. The studious boy is not ragged, and the American man is certainly not listless, but enthusiastic in all that he undertakes, whether in business, military, or scientific occupations.

Before I close what I have to say, I wish to insist upon co-education in the matter of teachers as well as pupils. The daily papers have been complaining lately of the foolish way

in which the youngest children in boys' schools are entrusted to the youngest teachers, in spite of the known fact that the young and backward pupils need very special attention. One writer says that they are the most difficult of all human material to handle. Now I insist upon the fact that women, by reason of their very sex, are better able to deal with the very young. They have not only more experience, but they are far more in touch with children than any man. They have what for want of a better word I may call intellectual sympathy. They never lose sight of the child itself and become absorbed in the matter taught, as men are liable to be. Much of the loathing for books and consequent idleness of boys has been implanted by his first male teachers, who even if not actually hard and brutal (as they certainly were in my time) are obtuse as to the difficulties of the young boy and intolerant of the difficulty which most children have in fixing their attention on subjects which don't interest them. The necessity of women teachers for the little boys is greater than the need of male teachers for the higher branches for girls, and yet in most girls' schools the value of men for certain subjects has never been doubted. Do let us throughout life allow the sexes to influence each other, allowing no interregnum, very especially not during that time when influence tells the most.

The return to what is after all the natural life is the remedy of the idleness of the schoolboy, and consequent want of interest in the man, the guard against ill-assorted unions, the cure demanded for perversion of feeling which leads to so much ill, the river Jordan in which the youthful Naaman may wash and be clean and grow up to be physically, morally, and intellectually a valuable member of society, a wise progenitor, aiding the future as well as the present.

[Discussion is invited.—ED.]

THE TEACHING OF ART.*

BY MARION THOMSON.

PERHAPS there is no expression which has become so meaningless by misuse as the term Art or Artistic. The meaning we wish it to convey when we speak of it in the school course is such a thorough training to the eye as will develop its utmost powers of observation and appreciation of beauty, and such a training to the hand as will enable it to give the best possible expression of that observation and appreciation.

The importance of drawing as a necessary subject in the ordinary time table is now generally acknowledged, and the time allowed for this and for other hand-work grows longer every year. The special faculties affected are observation, memory, judgment, and the senses of proportion and of colour, besides a valuable deftness and quickness of touch. If we allow these claims to the teaching of a subject, our next step is to consider how best we can undertake it and what methods we shall use. I have taught drawing now for many years and I have never ceased to congratulate myself on my chosen subject. It is one which all children are fond of—and this is of course a great help to the teacher—and if she brings to her work a great enthusiasm for her subject, a great love for her pupils and sufficient technical knowledge, she will find enough pleasure in her work and encouragement in the results to carry her through difficulties, fatigue and occasional disappointment. I put love of work and pupils before system, because, though this is necessary, a teacher thoroughly trained in a system will be a failure if she lacks sympathy, before the teacher whose sympathy gives her insight into the difficulties of her pupils, and who is able to provide special work for special individual cases. Personally, I consider a thorough technical training in the various branches of art better than any so-called system, which may be excellent for the originator, who has no scruple in breaking

* Lecture given to Belgravia Branch of P.N.E.U.